

Message Text

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NOFORN

FROM US REP MBFR

EO: 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJ: MBFR: DISCUSSION WITH SOVIET REPS FEB 15, 1974

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: FOLLOWING INDICATION OF SOVIMT INTEREST IN FURTHER BILATERAL DISCUSSION ON DEFINITION OF TOPICS FOR INFORMAL GATHERINGS, US REP AND DEPREP MET SOVIET REPS KHLESTOV AND SMIRNOVSKY ON FEB 15. SOVIETS ADVANCED POSITION SIMILAR TO THAT THEY HAD TAKEN IN LAST MULTILATERAL INFORMAL SESSIONS, BUT EVENTUALLY INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO REVIEW THEIR POSITION WITH A VIEW TO THEIR REMARKS AT NEXT MULTILATERAL SESSION SCHEDULED FOR FEB 20. END SUMMARY.

2. US REP TOLD SOVIETS IT WAS IN HIS VIEW TIME TO GET DOWN TO BUSINESS AND NOT ENGAGE IN USUAL PROCEDURAL FENCING. ALLIES HAD PRESENTED WORKABLE DEFINITION OF DISCUSSION TOPIC WHOSE FURTHER INVESTIGATION HE BELIEVED WOULD BE IN MUTUAL INTEREST, BUILDING INTO SUGGESTED FRAMEWORK FULLY ADEQUATE GUARANTEES THAT THIS LINE OF DISCUSSION WOULD NOT PREJUDICE SUBSTANTIVE INTERESTS OF EITHER SIDE. HE SAW NO REASON, IF SOVIETS MEANT BUSINESS, WHY THEY WOULD NOT ACCEPT THIS PROPOSAL. WITH AGREEMENT OF HIS ALLIED COLLEAGUES, HE HAD EVEN MADE FORMULA MORE EXPLICIT IN THE SENSE THAT IT COULD NOW CONSIST OF THREE ITEMS: US-SOVIET GROUND FOR-SECRET

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CES, INCLUSION OF OTHER DIRECT PARTICIPANTS AND PHASING. THIS SHOULD MEET ANY REASONABLE INTERESTS.

3. KHLESTOV SAID HIS PROPOSAL TO DISCUSS FOREIGN AND NATIONAL

FORCES COVERED ALL POINTS UNDER THE REDUCTION PROGRAM AND WOULD PERMIT U.S. TO LEAD OFF WITH DISCUSSION OF US-SOVIET GROUND FORCES IF IT WISHED TO. HE SAID US REP'S EFFORT TO DIVIDE SUBJECT MATTER INTO SUB-COMPONENTS OF US-SOVIET GROUND FORCES AND FORCES OF OTHER DIRECT PARTICIPANTS WAS PREJUDICIAL TO THE SOVIET PROGRAM BECAUSE THE LATTER DID NOT RECOGNIZE THESE SUB-CATEGORIES AS INDIVIDUAL TOPICS OF DISCUSSION. ONE SHOULD TAKE THE WHOLE SUBJECT MATTER OF FORCE REDUCTIONS AND UNDER THIS HEADING, VIEWS OF BOTH SIDES COULD BE INFORMALLY DISCUSSED WITHOUT PREJUDICE OR COMMITMENT. THE US COULD LEAD OFF WITH SOVIET-US GROUND FORCES. AS A PURELY THEORETICAL OBSERVATION, HE COULD NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT, AFTER SUFFICIENT DISCUSSION, AGREEMENT MIGHT IN THE FUTURE BE REACHED ON A US-SOVIET REDUCTION WHICH WOULD ALSO HAVE TO INCLUDE AIR OR NUCLEAR ELEMENTS. BUT THIS WAS A PURELY THEORETICAL CONSIDERATION. THE PARTICIPANTS WERE NOT DISCUSSING SUBSTANCE NOW, BUT PROCEDURE.

4. US REP COMMENTED THAT HE CONSIDERED THE SOVIET HEADINGS PREJUDICIAL. THE ALLIES HAD CAREFULLY FORMULATED A DISCUSSION SUBJECT WHOSE TREATMENT THEY BELIEVED MIGHT HAVE PRODUCTIVE RESULTS. THEY HAD DONE SO FOLLOWING INFORMAL INDICATIONS FROM EASTERN SIDE OF POSSIBLE INTEREST IN PHASING, WITH A FIRST PHASE FOCUSING ON US-SOVIET FORCES, UNDER APPROPRIATE CONDITIONS. THERE WAS NO POINT IN FENCING AROUND AS THOUGH THE TALKS WERE JUST BEGINNING AND A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF DISCUSSION HAD NOT ALREADY TAKEN PLACE.

5. KHLESTOV ARGUED ONCE AGAIN THAT THE DESIGNATION "US-SOVIET GROUND FORCES" WAS PREJUDICIAL TO THE SOVIET POSITION AND THAT HE COULD NOT ACCEPT IT AS A BASIS FOR COMMON DISCUSSION. HE SAID HE MIGHT BE WILLING TO SEPARATE NUCLEAR AND AIR ELEMENTS FROM THE FOREIGN FORCES AND NATIONAL FORCES FORMULA AND AGREE TO A 4-ITEM TOPIC OF DISCUSSION, STARTING WITH FOREIGN FORCES, THEN NATIONAL FORCES, THEN AIR AND NUCLEAR FORCES. HE MIGHT ALSO BE WILLING TO ACCEPT "STAGES" AS A FIFTH TOPIC.

6. US REP SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE JUNE 28 COMMUNIQUE GAVE PARTICIPANTS RIGHT TO RAISE ANY RELEVANT SUBJECT FOR NEGOTIATION AND
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THIS COULD NOT BE GAINSAID, ALLIES HAD NOT CHANGED THEIR NEGATIVE POSITION ON INCLUSION OF AIR AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS. KHLESTOV INSISTED THAT THESE WERE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE SOVIET APPROACH AND THAT TO LEAVE THEM COMPLETELY ASIDE WOULD INDICATE A CHANGE OF POSITION.

7. US REP SAID THAT, UNLESS THERE WAS SOME CHANGE, HE SAW NO POSSIBILITY OF PROGRESS TOWARDS AN AGREED FORMULATION. BOTH SIDES SHOULD RETHINK THEIR POSITION WITH A VIEW TO THE MULTILATERAL SESSION SCHEDULED FOR FEB 20. KHLESTOV AGREED, SAID SOVIETS DID NOT WISH TO BE DOGMATIC AND WOULD REVIEW THEIR POSITION. HE SAID IF AGREEMENT WERE REACHED ON A DEFINITION OF THE TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED, SOVIETS WOULD WISH TO HAVE ONE OR MORE SESSIONS

OF THE MULTILATERAL GROUP ON EACH OF THE TOPICS AGREED ON SO
THAT DISCUSSION WOULD NOT SIMPLY REMAIN SUSPENDED ON ONE TOPIC.
US REP INDICATED THAT IF FORMULATION OF TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED
WERE ADEQUATE, THIS MIGHT FROM HIS VIEWPOINT BE POSSIBLE.HUMES

SECRET

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